First Peoples' Heritage Language and Culture Council Arts Program

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL

ABORIGINAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

A Program Assessment

Prepared for

First Peoples' Heritage, Language & Culture Council

British Columbia Arts Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR ARTISTS ARE AMAZING TEACHERS who make the world a better place through the knowledge they share, ideas they express and the beauty they create. Their work carries spirit, language and the dreams and visions of our communities through dance, theatre, music, words and the visual arts. They assert the existence of our world, reflecting us back to ourselves—honouring Elders, inspiring youth and sharing this with the rest of the world. The activities of Aboriginal artists and cultural workers benefit all people in the province—culturally, intellectually, spiritually and economically.

—Cathi Charles Wherry, Ashnishnabe Artist, AADA Program Coordinator

Introduction and Assessment Context

ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PRACTICES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AT THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES and integral to both individual and societal health, growth and prosperity. In a province currently home to over 170,000 Aboriginal peoples both indigenous to the region and from outside of it, artistic expression continues to confer significant spiritual, intellectual, social and economic benefits.

The significance of these benefits is evidenced in the sharp increase in the number of community-based aboriginal arts organizations in the province. Whereas ten years ago only one such organization—Full Circle: First Nations Performance—existed, there are over 25 across the province today, from dance and performance groups like Rainbow Productions Society, Ksan Performing Arts and Urban Ink to media organizations such as the Indigenous Media Arts Group.

These organizations and artists have contributed to the expansion of an audience that wants to hear and see work that expresses Aboriginal voices. In addition to the spiritual and social advantages realized, this growing audience increases the potential for economic benefits. This trend is also in keeping with the worldwide rise in eco- and cultural tourism. Investment in Aboriginal arts and culture will become even more important as B.C. communities work to meet the opportunities presented by the 2010 Olympics.

The above context highlights the value of the First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council's ("FPHLCC") Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program ("the Program") as the only funding program dedicated solely to supporting the creative and professional development of emerging Aboriginal artists in British Columbia.

Started in 1993 by what is now known as the BC Arts Council, the objectives for the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program are:

- To assist emerging Aboriginal artists and/or arts organizations with projects that contribute to their professional and creative development
- To assist emerging Aboriginal artists and/or arts organizations with projects that contribute to the transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge

With the support of the British Columbia Arts Council ("BCAC"), the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program assists emerging Aboriginal artists and arts organizations with projects that contribute to their professional and creative development and projects that promote the transmission of traditional arts skills. Since its inception the Program has given $1,105,889 in awards (see Appendix D for annual breakdown).

Program Description

THE ABORIGINAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT AWARDS PROGRAM IS UNIQUE to British Columbia and serves a large and diverse aboriginal population totaling approximately 170,000 people, 198 First Nations communities, 26 Tribal councils, over 15 Métis councils and 25 Friendship Centres. British Columbia is also home to many Aboriginal peoples that originate from, and remain connected to, communities and cultures outside of this region. Of Canada's 53 Aboriginal languages, 32 are indigenous to British Columbia and those languages are reflective of the cultural and artistic diversity of the indigenous Aboriginal population. There are also 128 Aboriginal-directed schools and 75 Aboriginal Headstart programs involved in the education of thousands of Aboriginal children.

Started in 1993 by what is now known as BCAC, the objectives for the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program are:

- To assist emerging Aboriginal artists and/or arts organizations with projects that contribute to their professional and creative development
- To assist emerging Aboriginal artists and/or arts organizations with projects that contribute to the transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge

According to BCAC and FPHLCC staff, there is also an unstated program objective:

- To assist emerging Aboriginal artists to transition to recognized professional status and access mainstream funding.

There is a stated program focus on the transmission of traditional arts skills through mentorship or training. According to the annual reports it is also a program priority to provide and develop community based infrastructure.

To be eligible, individual applicants must be adult Aboriginal artists. For the purposes of the Program the term "Aboriginal artist" includes status, non-status, Métis or Inuit practitioners of traditional or contemporary art forms. The Program is available to Aboriginal artists from all Nations across Canada who currently reside in British Columbia, and as a result the Program has on occasion, funded traditionally based practices indigenous to other regions.

Funded by the BCAC and administered by FPHLCC since 1997, the AADA program provides awards of up to $5000 per year to emerging Aboriginal artists and up to $10,000 per year to Aboriginal arts and cultural organizations or collectives.

This relationship between BCAC and FPHLCC is more than a funding relationship and acts as a bridge between the Aboriginal arts community and BCAC. A high degree of communication and information sharing ensures that Aboriginal applicants are not segregated only to AADA but are also accessing other BCAC programs if eligible.

Between the years 1999/00 to 2003/04, the AADA program has received 368 applications—or between 55 and 92 each year. The projects involved both traditional and contemporary/experimental practice in all disciplines, visual arts, literary arts, theatre, media arts, dance and music. Requests for this period totaled just under $2.2 million.

In that five-year period, 151 awards have been given for a total of $844,630 in grant monies. The annual granting total has increased every year during this period by as little as 1% and up to 10%.

These figures indicate an overall success ratio of slightly less than 2:1, however that figure may be somewhat inflated due to a 15-38% decrease in the number of applicants in the years 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 and must be understood within that context. For example, as the table in Appendix B illustrates, the number of applicants in 1999/00 totaled 91 and 30 AADA awards were given. In the following year, only 56 applications were received but again 30 awards were given. It is only in the last year 2003/04 that we see the intake figures rise again to pre-2000 levels. Due to concerted efforts and staff outreach, the applicants number 90 again with the number of awards totaling 34.

The projects are selected through a peer review process that utilizes an adjudication committee typically comprised of five Aboriginal artists. Selection of that jury is based on areas of expertise, nation or heritage, geographical representation, gender, age, and an ability to respectfully and impartially consider both contemporary experimental work and traditionally-based practice.

Although the Program has no formal outreach component, staff do present artist workshops and community-based workshops emphasizing project development, proposal writing, creation of portfolio materials and documentation of work. Although outreach is a priority of FPHLCC staff, it is conducted on an irregular basis due to limited time and resources. The FPHLCC Arts Program provides an informal, but vital, communications network and regularly disseminates information to Aboriginal artists, communities and organizations about other opportunities and resources.

Scope and Objective of the Review

This independent program review was undertaken to assess:

1. The effectiveness of the Program
2. Whether the AADA program is meeting its objectives; and
3. Whether those objectives are still relevant to emerging Aboriginal artists

The Program review assessed the key Program components of effectiveness, relevancy and accessibility and includes:

- Impacts and benefits of the Program on recipients
- The extent to which the Program is achieving its objectives
- The relevancy of the Program's stated objectives
- The needs of emerging Aboriginal artist
- The extent to which the Program is meeting the real needs of Aboriginal artists
- Program accessibility and reach through review of the application process, jury process and profiling of applicants and recipients

Program Assessment Findings

Effectiveness

The Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program can demonstrate substantial impact and benefits to recipients in several ways:

- **Acts as a stepping stone or bridge to mainstream funding**
- **Develops artistic skills and knowledge**
- **Develops practical grant proposal writing skills**
- **Increases self confidence**
- **Buys time and materials**

Almost 92% of the stakeholders interviewed stated that the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program was meeting Objective #1.

- The award allowed recipients to spend more time on their craft (75%), to increase the amount of art they produce (50%) and to increase their revenue since receiving the grant (44%).
- The majority of recipients stated the grant allowed them to develop creatively and professionally, while half of the recipients reported the grant was a critical factor in their artistic development.
- Receiving an AADA award built self-confidence in the recipients, providing them with professional validation and peer recognition. The application process provided emerging artists with very valuable experience in proposal writing, experience that gave them confidence to pursue other funding sources. 38% of recipients interviewed have accessed further funding.

- Since receiving an AADA award just under 40% of recipients interviewed have won awards for their work and fully 50% have had public showings or presentations.
- Results were inconclusive as to how effectively the Program is accomplishing its #2 objective in regard to the transmission of traditional arts and skills.
- Program statistics demonstrate that the Program consistently assists emerging artists with projects that contribute to the transmission and sharing of traditional skills and knowledge with 50% of all awards given during the assessment period being for projects with a substantive traditional component.

Interviewees indicated that the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program was as effective as possible in realizing it objectives given its current resources but that an increase in financial resources could increase Program effectiveness by allowing for:

- Increased staffing
- Increased outreach and advertising
- More and larger grants
- Program expansion to include a focus on building community based organizational capacity and/or infrastructure
- Program expansion to include training in the business aspects of being an artist
- Allocation of the funding envelope so that traditional pursuits have a dedicated share for granting

Accessibility

The application process is time consuming and intense but accessible, easy to understand and straightforward and not seen as a barrier to applicants, particularly given the high level of assistance provided by program staff.

The majority of interviewees thought the existence of the AADA program is not widely well known although it is believed to be better known in the urban centres of the mainland than in rural areas and First Nations communities.

Most applicants had heard of AADA in two ways—by word of mouth from other artists, or through an arts school or arts organization.

As the chart on the next page indicates, there is equivalency of applicants and recipients by type, but it is clear that the program serves predominantly individual artists.

Profile Type	% Applicants	% Recipients
Individuals	77	77
Groups/Organizations/Collectives	20	21
First Nations Communities	3	2

As the table below demonstrates, analysis of program statistics demonstrates an equivalency of geographic distributions as between applicants and recipients, and that the highest percentage of both are in the Lower Mainland.

Geographic Location	% Applicants	% Recipients
Lower Mainland	39	36
North Island & Gulf Islands	11	19
Northwest Coast	9	7
South Island	19	18
Interior	22	20

The applicant recipient breakdown by discipline is as follows:

Discipline	% Applicants	% Recipients
Visual Contemporary	33	33
Visual Traditional	40	34
Words Contemporary	10	8
Words Traditional	0	0
Dance Contemporary	2	3
Dance Traditional	1	1
Music Contemporary	5	6
Music Traditional	1	2
Other Traditional	8	13

Relevancy

All stakeholder groups interviewed agreed that the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program Program objectives remain strongly relevant, with 91% of all interviewees stating that the objectives remain relevant to the needs of emerging Aboriginal artists and the Aboriginal arts community generally.

The needs of Aboriginal artists were identified in the following priority order:

1. Mentors
2. Money
3. Professional Development
4. Networks
5. Organizational Infrastructure

6. Exposure

Feedback on relevancy:

- A minimum of 51 projects—or 34%—of the total 151 awards given in the five-year period had a mentoring, teaching or training component.
- 64% of staff of both BCAC and FPLHCC, FPHLCC board members and past jury members felt the grant amounts for both individuals and organizations was inadequate.
- 15 of the 16 recipients interviewed, or 94%, indicated that they felt the amount was adequate for individual recipients and inadequate for organizations.
- The Program does not offer a formal network for emerging Aboriginal artists but FPHLCC program staff performs an informal, but significant role as an information sharing and communications network.
- The Program does not appear to address the need for organizational infrastructure directly.

General Conclusions

The findings from the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program assessment demonstrate that:

- There is a solid rationale for the continued existence of the Program in terms of impacts and benefits, need and relevancy.
- Recipients experience significant tangible and intangible benefits from the opportunities afforded by the awards, including higher production and income levels, increased public exposure, peer recognition/validation and increased self confidence.
- The Program objectives remain strongly relevant.
- Overall the objectives of the Program are being achieved but with varying degrees of effectiveness.
- While the majority of recipients felt strongly that the award allowed them to develop creatively and professionally, and despite all the positive indicators to evidence this development, most did not feel they had transitioned from being an emerging to established or professional artist.
- Although the Program can demonstrate a consistent and substantial level of support given to projects designed to learn or teach traditional art forms, stakeholders had mixed perceptions of how effectively this objective was being accomplished, with only 42% responding positively.
- Current award levels are adequate on an individual basis. Current award levels are inadequate for groups or organizations.
- Increased levels of program support would allow it to achieve its objectives more fully and meet the needs of emerging Aboriginal artists more effectively.
- The application is accessible and not too complex, while the application process provides a valuable educational experience for emerging artists, allowing them the experience and confidence to apply for other grants and develop both creatively and professionally.
- The existence of the Program is becoming better known, but there continues to be more awareness of its existence in the urban centres—particularly the lower mainland—than in rural areas and First Nations communities.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations for action can be considered.

Increase the level of **financial support** for the Program

Institute a formal **outreach component**

Institute a formal **communications and information network** component

Update the **objectives and the promotional materials** for the Program

Investigate ways for emerging Aboriginal artists to obtain **training in the business aspects** of being an artist

Formalize **data collection methods**

Provide **more definition to selection and eligibility criteria**

METHODOLOGY

Assessment Framework

The assessment framework was comprised of the Program Logic Model and Evaluation Plan.

Program Logic Model

Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program Objectives:

- To assist in the creative and professional development of emerging Aboriginal artists
- To assist in the retention and passing on of traditional Aboriginal artistic/cultural practices
- To enable emerging Aboriginal artists to transition to established or recognized professional status

INPUTS
AADA Staff Executive Director Arts Programs Coordinator Administrative Staff
Board of Council
BC Arts Council Cultural Services Staff
Funding
Adjudication Committee (Jury)
Volunteers
AADA Database
First Peoples' Cultural Foundation

ACTIVITIES
Outreach to potential applicants and grant recipients
Soliciting of applications
Maintenance of website & materials
Proposal Development Support
Applications review through Adjudication process
Selection of projects to receive a grant
Disbursement of grant monies to selected projects
Program management and evaluation reporting

RESULTS
# of potential applicants reached
# of applications received and from where
# of projects selected and for what
Amount of money given in grants per year
# of projects successfully completed
# of final reports received and files closed

Program Logic Model (continued)

OUTCOMES		
Short-term	**Intermediate**	**Long-term**
Professional and creative development of emerging artists	Emerging Artists gain the recognition of their peers	Preservation, revitalization and advancement of traditional Aboriginal arts
Artists devote more time to their professional or creative activity	Emerging artists develop a history of public presentation	Increased # of emerging artists learning Aboriginal art forms
Transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge through mentoring and training	Artists transition from emerging to established or recognized professional	Increased teaching and mentoring of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art forms

Evaluation Plan

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Professional and creative development of emerging artists	• Increase in artistic output • Increase in skill and knowledge level	All stakeholders
Artists devote more time to their professional or artistic activity	Artists spend less time on non-art pursuits/work	Award recipients
Transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge through mentoring and training	• Increased # of mentoring and training opportunities • Increased # of Aboriginal mentors • Increased # of AADA projects funded with mentoring and teaching components	All stakeholders. Program files and database, 1999-2004
Emerging artists gain recognition of their peers	• Industry Awards won • Approached by peers to collaborate • Name recognition in Arts community • Increased funding, showing and /or performance opportunities	Award recipients
Emerging artists develop a history of public presentation	• Had public performances and showings • Approached for public displays • Increased public exposure	Award recipients
Transition from emerging artist to recognized professional	• Advance from amateur to established professional • Paid for or increase in income for work • Access to mainstream funding	All Stakeholders, Aboriginal art organizations, and industry leaders

Evaluation Plan (continued)

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Preservation, revitalization and advancement of traditional Aboriginal arts	• Re-emergence of fading traditional art forms • Increased presence of Aboriginal art in Aboriginal and non-aboriginal society • Increase in volume of Aboriginal art produced • Increased public awareness of Aboriginal art • Aboriginal art taught in mainstream curriculums	Interviews with stakeholders, program files and database, 1999-2004, AADA staff
Increased # of emerging artists learning Aboriginal art forms	• Increased # of AADA applications received annually • Increased # of Aboriginal youth pursuing art	Program files and database, 1999-2004, AADA staff
Increased teaching and mentoring of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art forms	• Increase in number of AADA proposals received with teaching and mentoring components • Increase in number of AADA projects funded with mentoring and teaching components	Program files and database 1999-2004, AADA staff

Data Collection

The data collection tools were then designed in accordance with the Assessment Framework to capture the pertinent information.

The interview guides were informed by the following broad research questions:

1. What are the impacts and/or benefits of the Program on recipients?
2. To what extent is the AADA program achieving its stated objectives?
3. What would increase the effectiveness of the Program?
4. Are the Program objectives still relevant?
5. How important is a mentoring component to program effectiveness?
6. What are the real needs of emerging Aboriginal artists?
7. Is the Program accessible?
8. Is the Program being accessed by emerging artists, of various disciplines, from across the province?

Relying on program data for the five-year period 1999-2004, data collection methods included:

- 10 in-person and telephone interviews with management and staff of the FPHLCC and BCAC, and FPHLCC Board of Council Members.
- Of the 45 award recipients contacted, a total of 17 in-person and telephone interviews were conducted, representing roughly 11% of total grant recipients for the past 5 years.
- One focus group meeting with past adjudication committee members.
- Eight in-person and telephone interviews with past adjudication committee members.
- Two telephone interviews with managers of groups or Aboriginal arts organizations.
- Analysis of program statistics and data for the past five years, including: annual reports, Government Service Plan 2004/05 – 2006/07, program application forms, eligibility requirements, applicant lists and recipient lists.
- Analysis of applicants and grant recipients by artistic discipline, geographic location and type (individual, organization/ group or First Nation community).

RESULTS

Primary Observations

This section encapsulates the key results from the telephone and in-person interviews, focus group and document review as they pertain to program effectiveness, relevancy and accessibility.

I. Effectiveness

1. What are the impacts and/or benefits of the Program on recipients?

> *I was able to learn about the entire production process. This has been the opportunity of a lifetime!*
>
> AADA Awards Recipient 2003

It was clear from the interviews that the Program had significant impact on the majority of recipients. Recipients reported gaining both tangible and intangible benefits from the Program. For individuals it allowed them to produce more, show more and become more recognized. For groups or organizations, it allowed them to design and deliver projects that supported and nurtured emerging Aboriginal artists and to have skills and knowledge shared with numerous participants.

Staff of both BCAC and FPHLCC reported that the Program impacted on the professional and creative development of emerging artists in several ways:

- **Acts as a stepping stone or bridge to mainstream funding**
- **Develops artistic skills and knowledge**
- **Develops practical grant proposal writing skills**
- **Increases self confidence**

- **Buys time and materials**

These impacts were echoed by the recipients themselves. Of past recipients interviewed 75% reported that receiving the grant allowed them to devote more time to their artistic abilities, and 44% indicated that the grant allowed them to increase the amount of art they produced.

Most of those who reported increased productivity attributed it to being able to buy materials and/or to not work for a span of time. Artists reported that this freeing up of time and energy allowed them to concentrate on their craft without the distraction of working to finance their art, resulting in an increase in both the level of creativity and the amount of art produced.

> *That experience helped me be a grant writer, gave me ideas on how to write proposals and allowed me to get some grants from places like the Canada Council. Out of the 8 grant proposals I have now written I have only been declined once.*
>
> AADA Award Recipient 2000

Conversely, many of those who indicated the award did not result in an increase in their work or the amount of time they devoted to their art suggested that the grant was too small to allow them to stop working and solely focus on their craft. This may suggest that if grant amounts were higher it would allow more artists to not work, except on their craft, thereby increasing both skills and productivity.

As well as a direct increase in production or skills, recipients reported an intangible, but equally important benefit. Many recipients spoke of the increased confidence that successfully securing the AADA award gave them.

Over 65% of the recipients interviewed stated that a primary benefit of receiving the award was the boost it provided to their professional credibility and personal

> *That award was my first and validated my art, what I had worked hard towards for a good part of my life.*
>
> AADA Award Recipient 2002

confidence levels. The very fact that a group of peers validated their work through a competitive process had significant meaning beyond the monetary. They felt this peer recognition not only validated their work and efforts but also gave them the confidence to move forward creatively and professionally, encouraging them to pursue other grants, new opportunities and/or new markets.

> *The grant gave us success, if it wasn't for the grant we wouldn't have gotten the success or the recognition by our community.*
>
> Group AADA Award Recipient

Many also spoke to how valuable they thought the total application preparation experience was. Most of the recipient interviewed mentioned having little or no proposal writing experience prior to applying to the Program and how through this experience they gained valuable skills regarding preparation of a portfolio, a resume and a grant proposal. Many spoke to how gaining that experience has given them confidence to pursue other funding avenues.

This experience, combined with the self confidence it fostered and the peer recognition and professional validation bestowed by receiving an AADA grant, allowed 35% of past recipients to go on to access mainstream funding. Of the 17 recipients interviewed, 6 had gone on to successfully secure grants from other sources such as Canada Council of the Arts and BCAC. Almost half of the recipients, 8 of the 17 interviewed, had not yet applied for other funding and 3 had applied but not been successful.

> *The program is really important for emerging artists, it gives them credibility to approach other funders and the confidence to do it. The Canada Council likes to see some background, so emerging artists are more likely to be successful with a First Peoples award.*
>
> AADA Awards Recipient 2003

2. To what extent is the AADA program achieving its stated objectives?

OBJECTIVE 1:

To assist emerging Aboriginal artists and/or arts organizations with projects that contribute to their professional and creative development.

> *I now sell to museums and galleries. Some of my art is included in the permanent collection at the museum in Ottawa.*
>
> AADA Awards Recipient 1999

Almost 92% of all the stakeholders interviewed stated that the Program was meeting this objective. In particular, the recipients interviewed felt strongly that the award allowed them to increase their skills and knowledge. The individual recipients were unanimous in reporting that the award helped them advance their creative and professional skills and knowledge.

Half of those individual recipients further stated that the grant was critical to their development as an artist. The recipients who reported it was not critical to their development still felt it provided a tremendous boost to their growth as artists. As one recipient stated, *"The award was maybe not critical but helpful. I still may have gotten to where I am today without it, however it would have taken longer."*

The group or organizational recipients unanimously reported that the grant was very critical to their projects getting off the ground. They reported that without the award those projects could not have occurred and the participants would not have been able to benefit from them.

The indication that the Program is assisting artists develop creatively and professionally is further supported by the fact that many award recipients have gone on to win awards, have public showings or performances and generate income from their craft. Since receiving the award, just under 40% of recipients have won awards for their work and fully 50% have had public showings/ presentations.

Furthermore, the majority of those who reported having won awards or had showings stated that the AADA grant contributed directly to those achievements. Additional proof of artistic development is demonstrated by the finding that 75% of award recipients interviewed have begun to get paid, or experienced an increase in income generated from their work, since receiving the award.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To assist emerging Aboriginal artists and/or arts organizations with projects that contribute to the transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge.

The assessment provided inconclusive results as to how effectively the Program is accomplishing its objective in regard to the transmission of arts and skills. While 42% of those interviewed stated that they felt the AADA program effectively supports the sharing and transmission of traditional arts and skills, 33% were not sure and the remaining 25% thought the Program was accomplishing this objective but only to a limited extent.

Responses came across the spectrum from *" [t]he program has significantly impacted the reemergence of traditional art by just existing"*, to *"[t]here is an attempt there to do that but not sure how successful that attempt is."*

However, despite this lack of conviction on the part of interviewees, the Program statistics demonstrate that the Program is consistently assisting emerging artists with projects that contribute to the transmission and sharing of traditional skills and knowledge.

Analysis of program statistics in their current form indicated that the percentage of applications with a traditional focus[1] has neither increased nor decreased sharply in the last five years, consistently comprising between 34 - 50% of the total applications. Likewise the number of awards given with a traditional focus has

[1] For the purposes of this report, traditional focus includes any project with a traditional component, including, but not limited to: regalia making, painting, weaving, carving, drum making, moose tufting, blanket making, canoe making, traditional music, story telling and beading.

consistently been between approximately 30-60% of the annual total for an overall total of 50%. Furthermore, more than 1/3, or a minimum of 51 projects of the total 151 grants awarded in the five-year period, had a mentoring component, with most of those mentoring or teaching artists in traditional art forms.

These numbers do suggest that although there has been no great increase in the number of applications with a traditional focus over the last five years, the Program's commitment to supporting traditional practices remains consistent. However, it is important to note that these numbers may not be entirely accurate due to inconsistencies in the method of data collection and recording of program data from year to year.

OBJECTIVE 3: ***To provide a bridge for emerging Aboriginal artists to transition to recognized professional status, thereby allowing them to access mainstream funding.***

The assessment results are mixed as to how effectively this program objective is being achieved. As noted, almost 40% of interviewed recipients have successfully accessed further funding since receiving the award. This fact, combined with the results that many have experienced an increase in their artistic skills and knowledge, an increase in their confidence levels, the number of public showings and an increase in their income, would suggest that the Program is assisting recipients in transitioning to professional status.

> *I consider myself a professional artist compared to five years ago when I received the grant. I got experience in applying for grants. Something I never knew anything about before.*
>
> Awards Recipient 1999

> *The AADA award opened more doors for funding, it made me realize that there was more money out there and gave me the confidence, and proposal writing skills, to go after it.*
>
> Awards Recipient 2000

Despite these positive indicators, only 25% of recipients interviewed consider themselves having transitioned from an emerging to an established or professional artist. However, many respondents did report feeling that they had moved further along the spectrum to professional because of the AADA grant.

The results do not make it clear why only one quarter of awards recipients feel they have advanced past being an emerging artist but several possibilities can be extrapolated from the findings:

- Lack of desire or intent to pursue professional status as defined by mainstream culture
- One relatively small award is not enough to allow this result
- Recipients lack the 'business' knowledge to gain the exposure and recognition they need to transition to an established or professional artist
- Despite positive indicators, the artist continues to perceive him/herself as an emerging or amateur artist
- Mainstream venues present systemic barriers that limit full access and participation of Aboriginal Artists.

> *It is not enough to receive a small grant to focus on your art or create works if you don't know how to market, show or sell those products and get yourself known. The Program does not help with that aspect*
>
> AADA Awards Recipient, 2002

3. What would increase the effectiveness of the Program?

Most of the interviewees indicated that they felt the Program was as effective as possible in realizing its objectives given the limited capacity and resources is

operates with. However they indicted that if those resources could be increased, then so too would program effectiveness. Interviewees expressed that with increased financial resources the Program could be even more effectively achieve its objectives by allowing for:

- Increased staffing
- Increased outreach and advertising
- More and larger grants
- Program expansion to include a focus on building community-based organizational capacity and/or infrastructure

> *By having a program component specifically for organizations, and community based arts infrastructure development, by increasing infrastructure and funding around Aboriginal art you will more fully achieve your objectives, increase your reach, and see a longer lasting impact.*
>
> BCAC Staff Member

- Program expansion to include training in the business aspects of being an artist
- Allocation of the funding envelope so that traditional pursuits have a dedicated share for granting

II. Relevancy

1. What are the real needs of emerging Aboriginal artists?

Recipients, past jury members and organizations were asked what the most important needs of an emerging Aboriginal artist are. The needs were identified in the following priority order:

1. Mentors

Stakeholders emphasized mentoring and teaching as integral to:

- The development of emerging artists
- The transmission and preservation of traditional art forms
- The learning and development of contemporary art
- The development of youth artists

2. Money

Grants large enough to:

- Allow artists to buy materials
- Be able to concentrate solely on their art
- Be able to rent physical space
- Be able to pay a mentor

3. Professional Development

Training/learning opportunities for artists to learn the business aspects of being an artist, such as how to market your work, budget effectively, or strategically plan.

4. Networks

To help emerging artists:

- Meet other artists
- Share information and resources
- Ask questions
- Get advice and learn from others

5. Organizational Structure

In local communities and organizations that support Aboriginal artists and art forms

6. Exposure

Emerging artists need opportunities to get their work out into the public to build recognition and increase sales.

The ancillary question of "To what extent is the Program meeting these needs?" is beyond the scope of this assessment, but some inferences can be made based on the findings.

The AADA program does address the two needs of highest priority, mentorship/teaching and financial resources directly.

Looking at the granting component of the Program, when interviewees were asked if the amount of the AADA awards were adequate to meet the needs of artists and achieve the Program objectives the responses were mixed. Almost 2/3 (64%) of staff of both BCAC and FPLHCC, FPHLCC board members and past jury members felt the grant amounts for both individuals and organizations was inadequate.

Several staff, while stating the amounts were too low, indicated that they were consistent with award levels at BCAC and that was important in regards to management of expectations. The remaining 36% however, indicated that they felt $5000 was a good sized grant for a starter project but may not be enough for a more accomplished artist.

Conversely, 15 of the 16 recipients interviewed, or 94%, indicated that they felt the amount was adequate for individual recipients and inadequate for organizations. The remaining 1 interviewee thought the amounts were inadequate for both.

> *Absolutely anything serving to protect and revitalize art and culture is essential not only to individual artists but to Aboriginal societies as a whole.*
>
> FPHLCC Board Member

In regards to mentoring and teaching, the Program has historically placed high importance on mentoring, teaching and training. This focus is demonstrated in the application package which states that the AADA program is meant "also to assist with the transmission of traditional art skills through mentorships or training". The emphasis placed on this component is also reflected in the award distribution.

Analysis of program records demonstrates that a minimum of 51 projects or more than 1/3 of the total 151 grants (34%) awarded in the five-year period had a mentoring, teaching or training component.

Further, it was clear from the interviewees that this mentoring component was highly valued and should remain a focus of the Program. It was also noted that the mentoring component was important in that it allows for the sharing of the spiritual, historical, linguistic and scientific aspects imbued in the creation of Aboriginal art.

The Program does seek to address the need for professional development directly in that one of its fundamental purposes is to support projects that will allow emerging artists to develop creatively and professionally. It does not however, assist directly in training recipients in the 'business' aspects of being artists.

Although the Program does not offer a formal network for emerging Aboriginal artists, it was noted by many of the interviewees that the FPHLCC program staff performs an informal, but significant role as an information sharing and communications network, providing information to all inquiring minds on funding sources, art or cultural events, Aboriginal art and peoples, learning opportunities and more.

In regards to organizational infrastructure or exposure, the Program does not appear to address those needs directly.

2. Are the Program objectives still relevant?

All stakeholder groups interviewed agreed that the AADA program objectives remain strongly relevant, with 91% of all interviewees stating that the Program objects remain relevant to the needs of emerging Aboriginal artists and

> *The objectives hit the core needs of Aboriginal artist who are trying to establish themselves. Definitely still relevant.*
>
> 2002 Grant Recipient

the Aboriginal arts community generally.

Many representatives spoke to how unique the Program is in its objectives, stating that no other grant making program in British Columbia serves to support emerging Aboriginal artists and the transmission of traditional art skills. Many spoke to the need for this program in a society where dominant, non-Aboriginal views and standards around art preside and where Aboriginal arts and cultural practices are not only undervalued, but at risk of disappearing in many cases.

> *Significantly, [the objectives] address the most pressing issues surrounding Aboriginal arts, passing on of traditional skills to young people and also helping the emerging artist develop.*
>
> FPHLCC Board Member

III. Accessibility

1. Is the Program accessible?

Accessibility was measured in terms of the application process, program reach and distribution.

> *I had never even considered writing a grant before that. Just the fact that I received a grant was a tremendous boost. The application process itself was intense but very achievable. I learned so much from that process and it has allowed me to be more confident in applying for other grants.*
>
> 2003 Grant Recipient

Over 87% of the recipients interviewed stated the application forms are accessible, easy to understand and straightforward. Interviewees also stated that applicants receive adequate assistance from program staff during the application process and feel that assistance was key to successfully completing the application.

Although recipients reported that the application process is time consuming and intense this was not seen as a barrier to applicants, particular given the high level of

assistance provided by program staff. Many recipients stated that the application process provided them a valuable educational experience as an emerging artists and having completed it gave them confidence to apply for other grants.

However, that being said, several respondents spoke to how intimidating proposal writing can be for emerging artists and how valuable proposal writing training workshops would be to help emerging artists understand how to create a portfolio, draft a resume and write a proposal.

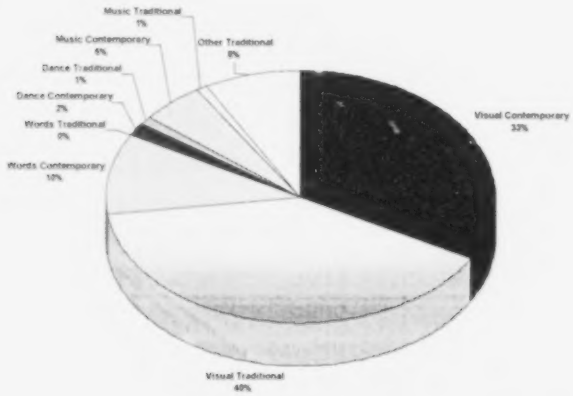
Although this was not seen to be the responsibility of the AADA program it was considered essential training for artists who wish to 'go pro' because if an emerging artist does not have a mentor to learn these skills from, then there are few other options for learning. Several respondents commented that the application and selection processes were 'western' or 'non-Aboriginal' in nature but were unable to suggest an alternative model.

Awareness of program existence also plays a direct role in its effectiveness and accessibility. The findings indicated that the existence of the AADA program is believed to be not well known generally, although it is believed to be better known in the urban centres of the mainland than in rural areas and First Nations communities. Most applicants had heard of AADA in two ways, by word of mouth from other artists or through an arts school or arts organization.

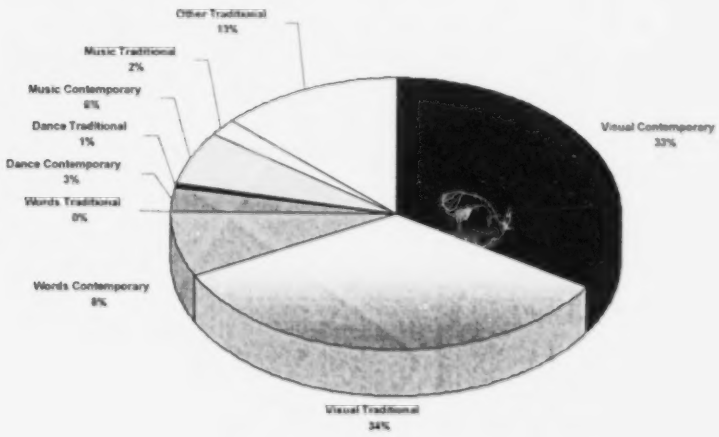
2. **Is the Program being accessed by emerging artists, of various disciplines, from across the province?**

Accessibility was also measured in terms of application and grant distribution. Quantitative analysis of program statistics was completed in order to evaluate the fairness and equivalency of grant distribution and to create a profile of both applicants and recipients based on the interrelated factors of discipline, type and geographic location.

Applicant Profile by Discipline (Contemporary & Traditional Mediums) 1999-2004

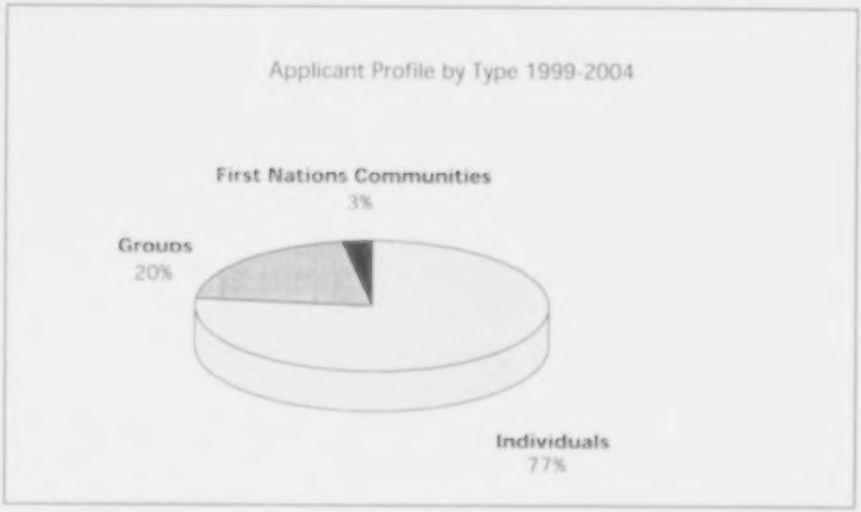


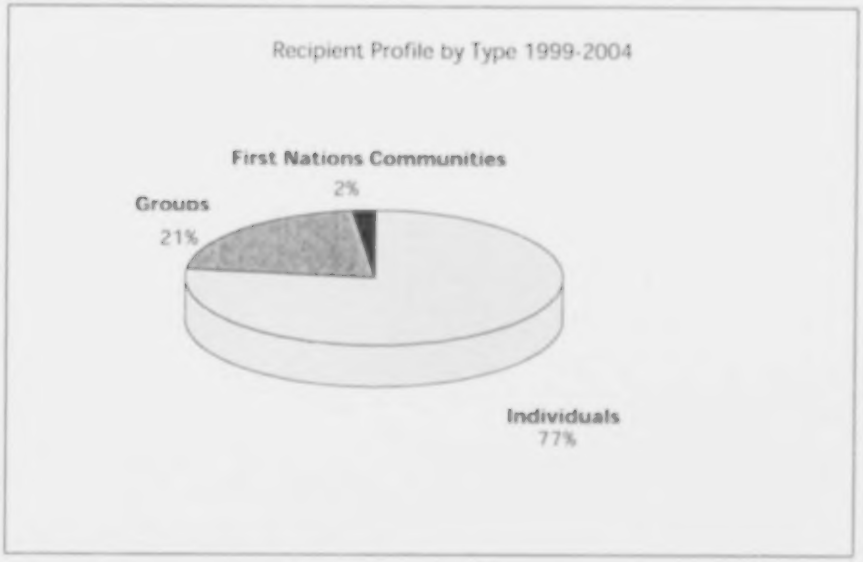
Recipient Profile by Discipline (Contemporary & Traditional Mediums) 1999-2004



As the previous charts illustrate, on the whole, the percentage of applicants are roughly equivalent to the percentage of recipients by discipline. In addition, there is equivalency between the percentage of Traditional and Contemporary mediums both as applicant and recipient. Adding up the percentages demonstrates that in the Applicant profile 50% focused on contemporary practices and 50% traditional. As the Recipient Profile demonstrates, this breakdown is held up in the selection process where 50% of the grant recipients targeted contemporary practice and 50% traditional.

This demonstrates a consistently high degree of grant-making equivalency by disciplines, suggesting no internal programmatic bias. This result is likely also indicative of well-balanced adjudicative process comprised of jurors that are multi-disciplinary in their representation and able to impartially consider both contemporary work and traditionally based practice.


Applicant Profile by Type 1999-2004
First Nations Communities
3%
Groups
20%
Individuals
77%

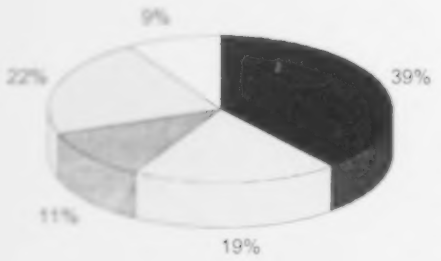

Recipient Profile by Type 1999-2004
First Nations Communities
2%
Groups
21%
Individuals
77%

As the preceding charts illustrate, we again see an equivalency of applicants and recipients by type. It is clear though, that the Program serves predominantly individual artists. 77% of the applicants and recipients are individuals, which indicates that individual artists are both applying for and receiving AADA funding in greater numbers than Aboriginal groups/organizations or First Nations. However, First Nations and groups/organizations are being funded consistently when they do apply.

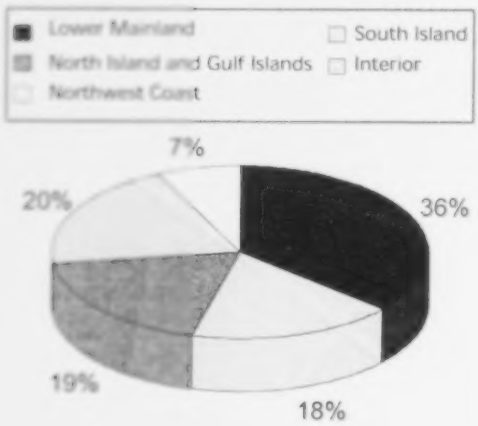
The very low percentage of First Nations applying is noteworthy and may be attributable to a lack of awareness that the Program exists. This would be consistent with the finding that interviewees felt the Program was better known in urban centres than rural or on-reserve communities. More direct outreach to First Nations may change this profile.

It was noted by FPHLCC staff that the Program is promoted to First Nations through faxed posters, e-mails and mailouts, but as few First Nations have staff devoted to an arts and cultural portfolio the call for proposals often goes unheeded. This reflects the need for building the capacity of Aboriginal communities to manage their arts and culture activities and to support the expansion of local infrastructure and administration to accommodate that management.

Geographic Profile of Applicants 1999-2004



Geographic Profile of Recipients 1999-2004



Again the analysis demonstrates equivalency of geographic distribution between applicants and recipients, as the percentage of applicants are roughly equivalent to

the percentage of recipients by geographic location, with the exception of the North Island & Gulf Islands region.

It is clear from the geographic profile that almost twice as many artists from the Lower Mainland are applying for and receiving AADA funding as compared to any other region in the province. This trend may be partially explained by the fact that the Lower Mainland has the largest concentration of Aboriginal peoples within the province, and likely a correspondingly high concentration of Aboriginal artists and art organizations.

This finding may also indicate a lack of programmatic effectiveness in assisting emerging artists in regions of higher need. If it is assumed there are more resources available to emerging artists in the lower mainland but less in the outlying or more remote regions, and if that assumption is correct then it may be presumed that the need for financial and institutional support is greater outside of the lower mainland. Therefore, if the Program seeks to reach those emerging artists who have few or no opportunities to develop then it should support artists from those regions in greater numbers.

This type of distribution correction may be occurring internally with the AADA program as suggested by the higher recipient to applicant distribution in the North Island & Gulf Island region where recipient figures are 8% higher than applicant.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program Assessment demonstrate that:

- There is a solid rationale for the continued existence of the AADA program in terms of impacts and benefits, need and relevancy
- Recipients experience significant tangible and intangible benefits from the opportunities afford by the awards, including higher production and income levels, increased public exposure, peer recognition/validation and increased self confidence
- The Program objectives remain strongly relevant
- Overall the objectives of the Program are being achieved but with varying degrees of effectiveness
- While the majority of recipients felt strongly that the award allowed them to develop creatively and professionally, and despite all the positive indicators to evidence this development, most did not feel they had transitioned from being an emerging to established or professional artist
- Although the Program can demonstrate a consistent and substantial level of support given to projects designed to learn or teach traditional art forms, stakeholders had mixed perceptions of how effectively this objective was being accomplished, with only 42% responding positively
- Current award levels are adequate on an individual basis. Almost all of the recipients 94% stated the award amounts were adequate for a first time grant for an emerging artist
- Current award levels are inadequate for groups or organizations. Almost 100% of the stakeholders interviewed stated the award amounts were inadequate to support the capacity building, programmatic and infrastructure needs of Aboriginal arts organizations
- Increased levels of program support would allow it to achieve its objectives more fully and meet the needs of emerging Aboriginal artist more effectively
- The application is accessible and not too complex while the application process provides a valuable educational experience for emerging artists, allowing them the experience and confidence to apply for other grants
- The existence of the AADA program is becoming better known but there continues be more awareness of its existence in the urban centres, and particularly the lower mainland than in rural areas and First Nations communities

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations for action can be considered.

1. **Increase the level of financial support for the Program**
   The AADA program is viewed as unique and essential in its support of emerging Aboriginal artists and its commitment to the transmission of traditional art forms. Anecdotal feedback from both recipients and staff suggests that the necessity of the Program is further underlined by the fact that Aboriginal art forms can be at a disadvantage when assessed against non-aboriginal, long standing initiatives within mainstream funding arenas.

   It is recommended that other public and private sector funding partnerships be sought to expand the Program's grant-making envelope. Collaboration with other arts funders to develop subject specific funds may be one way of expanding the Program's resources and scope.

   Development of a long-term program sustainability plan that incorporates fundraising, revenue generation and diversification and strategic investment is recommended.

2. **Institute a formal outreach component.**
   Outreach is understood to be essential to creating program awareness among the target client base, integral to improving program access, insightful in assessment of client needs, and important to building valuable community capacity. Although program staff clearly engage in outreach whenever and however possible, the benefits to both the Program and its beneficiaries that would result from instituting a structured outreach component with dedicated resources can not be overstated.

3. **Institute a formal communications and information network component.**
   The Program staff already plays a significant role as a communication and information network for the Aboriginal arts and culture communities by providing information about other programs, events, sources of funding and opportunities. This role could be formalized and made more efficient addin[illegible]his information to the website. This would require some dedicated resources however for updating and maintenance.

5. **Update the objectives and the promotional materials for the Program.**
   If it is an objective of the Program to assist emerging Aboriginal Artist to transition to recognized professional status and access mainstream funding then this objective should be stated outright. Likewise, make the Program focus on the transmission of traditional arts skills through mentorship or training a program objective. The findings demonstrate that it is considered a much-needed and integral component of the Program. This recommendation also applies to the Program priority to provide and develop community based infrastructure.

   Making these recognized priorities formal programmatic objectives will allow for them to be resourced and strategically acted upon.

   Throughout program promotional materials, application forms and website information change "First Nations" to the more inclusive term "Aboriginal" so off-reserve, non-status, Métis and Inuit persons are certain they are eligible to apply.

6. **Investigate ways for emerging Aboriginal artists to obtain training in the business aspects of being an artist.**
   Although beyond the current scope and mandate of the Program this need was identified as a priority need of emerging artists.

7. **Formalize data collection methods.**
   Instituting consistent data collection methods for the gathering and recording of vital programmatic statistics will ensure accurate analysis and evaluation when necessary.

8. **Provide more definition to selection and eligibility criteria.**
   Many of the past adjudication committee members indicated that more defined selection and eligibility criteria would allow for effective adjudication. However, that request must be balanced against concerns voiced by adjudication committee members and recipients regarding engaging in a 'western models' for application and project selection.

Appendix A

Interview Guides

AADA Program Review: Interview Guide—Grant Recipients

On behalf of First Peoples Heritage, Language and Cultural Council in Victoria we are conducting a review of its Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program. The purpose if this review is to determine if the AADA program is meeting its objectives and if those objectives are still relevant to emerging Aboriginal artists across the province. There is no right or wrong answers and we recognize that everyone has different points of view. All information provided will be confidential and will be aggregated.

1. Did receiving the AADA grant affect the amount of art you produce?
2. To what extent, if any, did receiving the AADA grant directly allow you to increase your skill and knowledge?
3. Did receiving the grant allow you to devote more time to your artistic activities?
4. How did receiving this grant impact on your professional and creative development? *(Groups & Organizations)* How did receiving this grant impact on the professional and/or creative development of the emerging artist you worked with on the organizations project?
5. Since receiving the AADA award have you won any awards for your work? If yes, what were they and how much did the AADA award contribute to that success?
6. Since receiving the AADA award have you had any public showings? If yes, how much did the AADA award contribute to that success?
7. Has receiving the AADA award, and the opportunity it allowed to you as an emerging artist, opened other doors for funding? *(Groups & Organizations)* Has receiving the AADA award opened other funding doors for your organization?

8. Since receiving the AADA award have you been begun to get paid for your work or experienced an increase in income generated from your work?

9. In your opinion, since receiving the AADA award have you advanced from an emerging to established artist? If yes, how much did the AADA award contribute to that that transition?

10. Based on your experiences, was the grant amount received adequate to advance your skills, knowledge and/or professional development? *(Groups & Organizations)* to advance the skills knowledge and/or professional development of those artists your organizational project worked with?

11. Please describe your experience of the AADA application process in terms of:

    - The ability to access, understand and complete the application forms and requirements

    - The level of assistance and guidance you received form AADA program staff during the application process

12. How would you describe the level of awareness about the AADA program among emerging Aboriginal artists in British Columbia?

13. How did you hear about the program and come to apply?

14. Based on your experiences, how would you describe the impact the AADA program has had on the sharing/transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge?

15. The objectives of the Aboriginal Arts Development Program are:

    - To assist in the creative or professional development of emerging Aboriginal artists

    - To support the sharing/transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge

    - To enable emerging Aboriginal artists to transition to recognized professional status

    Do you feel that these objectives remain relevant and appropriate?

16. Do you see these objectives supporting the needs of emerging Aboriginal Artists? *(Groups & Organizations)* Do these objectives support the needs of Aboriginal art organizations or groups?

17. In your experience and opinion, what are the 3 or 4 most important needs of an emerging Aboriginal artist? *(Groups & Organizations)* What are the most pressing needs of Aboriginal organizations or groups in terms of supporting and developing Aboriginal arts and emerging artists? Please state them in order of priority.

18. Is there anything else that relates to the AADA program, its objectives, impacts or opportunities for improvement that you wish to share?

AADA Program Review: Interview Guide—Program Staff and Board

1. What impact or effect has the program had on the professional and creative development of emerging Aboriginal artists?

2. How has the AADA program impacted on the transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge through teaching and mentoring?

3. As emerging Aboriginal Artists, how has the program affected the awards recipients in regards to transitioning from amateur to professional status?

4. How has the receipt of an AADA award affected the recipients' ability to access mainstream funding, such as BCAC grants or Canada Council for the Arts?

5. What impact or effect has AADA program had in regards to the preservation and revitalization of traditional Aboriginal artists?

6. In your opinion, is the size of the grants (up to 5K for individuals and 10k for organizations) adequate to achieve the program objectives?

7. Are the objectives of AADA still relevant? Do you see them as supporting the needs of emerging Aboriginal artists?

8. What feedback have you received, if any, on the application process in terms of:

   - The ability to access, understand and complete the application forms and requirements

   - The level of assistance and guidance from AADA program staff during the application process

9. Is there anything else that the AADA program could do to fulfill its objectives better or more effectively?

10. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

AADA Program Review: Interview Guide—Past Jury Members

1. How would you describe the awards selection process?
2. How well know is the AADA program among emerging Aboriginal Artists in B.C.?
3. Are the AADA grants accessible?
4. What outcomes or impacts have you observed the program having on the professional and creative development of emerging Aboriginal artists here in B.C.?
5. How has the AADA program impacted on the transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge through teaching and mentoring?
6. What outcomes have you observed in regards to the program assisting recipients to transition from emerging to established or professional status?
7. Have you observed that the receipt of an AADA award affected the recipients' ability to access mainstream funding, such as BCAC grants or Canada Council for the Arts?
8. What impact or effect has AADA program had in regards to the preservation and revitalization of traditional Aboriginal artists?
9. In your opinion, is the size of the grants (up to 5K for individuals and 10K for organizations) adequate to achieve the program objectives?
10. Is there anything else that the AADA program could do to fulfill its objectives better or more effectively?
11. What are the three or four most pressing needs of an emerging Aboriginal artist? Please state them in order of priority.
12. In your opinion is the AADA program meeting its stated objectives?

continued on next page

13. The objectives of the Aboriginal Arts Development Program are:

- To assist in the creative or professional development of emerging Aboriginal artists
- To support the sharing/transmission of traditional arts skills and knowledge
- To enable emerging Aboriginal artists to transition to recognized professional status

Do you feel that these objectives remain relevant and appropriate? Do they support the needs of emerging artists?

14. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

Appendix B

Aboriginal Arts Development Awards Program

Applicant/Recipient Ratio Data

YEAR	# OF APPLICANTS	TOTAL REQUESTED	# OF AADA AWARDS	TOTAL AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED
1993/94	64		20	$107,073
1994/95			20	$ 93,060
1995/96			15	$ 82,688
1996/97	21	$177,592.82	15	$ 68,475
1997/98	29	$216,620.00	17	$ 84,963
1998/99	90	$557,518.76	38	$125,000
1999/2000	91	$535,788.00	30	$121,530
2000/01	56	$304,328.15	30	$135,000
2001/02	75	$441,623.00	28	$143,100
2002/03	55	$374,421.00	29	$145,000
2003/04	90	$536,556.50	34	$150,000
TOTAL				$1,105,889